

At the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May 2018 (the AGM) Peter King was re-elected as chairman with Andrew Jones as vice chairman. Cllr John Darvill stood down from the council in October and he was thanked for all his work for the council and the community during his time as a councillor.

A total of 18 planning applications were considered during the year being a decrease on the previous year. The Parish Council has spent a great deal of time dealing with problems which have arisen as a result of works on the Kielder, Church Lane site and, later in the year, the Pinkers Farm site. The council has appointed Cllr Waldron to take over Cllr Darvill in monitoring the Construction Management Plans for these development sites and contacting the site managers should problems arise. Unfortunately, there have been continuing problems with heavy vehicles accessing the Pinkers Farm site outside the specified hours. These matters have been raised with the contractors.

As a result of these developments, the Parish Council receives a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy which by in 2018/19 totalled £16,500.00. Some of these monies have been granted to the new Play Area. The council continues to support the playing field financially by way of an annual grant. Additionally, the Chew Valley Neighbourhood Plan villages receive a proportion of the funds and East Harptree is also able to bid for funds from the CVNP to further support village projects and consideration is currently being given to matters of pedestrian safety in the High Street. The update of the B&NES Local Plan continues and the Parish Council has responded to an options consultation and a HELAA review where sites have been identified in the village. Site Assessments have been prepared and submitted and further information on the updated plan is awaited from B&NES.

The Parish Council monitors parish highways and byways and reports problems and defects to the local authority highways department. As well as potholes, there have been several instances of blocked drains and gullies which cause local flooding. Work continues to ensure resilience in the event of flooding in the village.

The Parish Sweeping Agreement has been discontinued and although the B&NES grant will be received for a short period, the Parish Council has decided to retain the sweeper and, as a result, there has been an increase in the Parish precept of around 13%. Paul Sperring continues to do an excellent job and will be keeping an eye on flooding hot spots in the village and keeping gullies clear.

The Parish Council supported an initiative on the Future Strategy for the village, and received the results of the survey in September. Councillors have taken on specific roles to support the initiatives proposed.

Meetings have been held with B&NES about pedestrian safety in the High Street and, in particular, the safety of children walking down to the playing field. Some form of virtual pavement has been discussed and further details are to be agreed.

The website continues to give details of meeting minutes, financial information, councillors interests, etc. and the village email list allows the council to contact parishioners directly about matters of import. The Parish Council received its requested precept at the start of the year and maintains budget and accounting information on the website. I would like to thank councillors for their work and assistance during the year.

Peter King.